

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing apparatus comprising:
a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, each of the plurality of means for providing user information items including different user information items regarding said user; and
means for acquiring said different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information providing means and merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said merge information providing apparatus comprises:
user information acquisition means for acquiring said different information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information providing means; and
user information merging means for merging said different information items regarding said user acquired in said user information acquisition means.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said different information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information providing means by using first use permission information permitting the use of each of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further comprising use permission information acquisition means for

acquiring said first use permission information from each of said plurality of user information providing means.

Claim 5 (Original): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising use permission information creation means for creating second use permission information that permits the use of said merge user information providing means.

Claim 6 (Original): The merge information providing apparatus of the claim 5, wherein said use permission information creation means creates said second use permission information including said first use permission information by using said first use permission information.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising means for setting up each of said plurality of user information providing means according to a request.

Claims 8-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): An information providing apparatus comprising:
means for providing a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus,
wherein said merge user information providing apparatus includes said user information providing means and other user information providing means that are subordinate to said merge user information providing means, each of the other user

information providing means including different information items regarding the designated user.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein said user information providing means further comprises means for saving said plurality of different information items regarding said user.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein said plurality of different information items regarding said user include [[is]] user information and/or group information of a group to which said user belongs, and wherein said group information includes user information and/or group information of other user information providing means.

Claims 22-24 (Canceled).

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): A managing apparatus, comprising:

a merge information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing information items regarding a user, each of the plurality of means for providing information items including different information items regarding said user,

means for transmitting a setup request regarding a set up of each of said plurality of user information items providing means, and

means for acquiring said different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means and merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising:

means for acquiring said different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means; and

means for merging said different user information items regarding said user acquired in said user information acquisition means.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said different information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information providing means by using first use permission information permitting the use of each of said plurality of user information items providing means.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 27, further comprising use permission information acquisition means for acquiring said first use permission information from each of said plurality of user information items providing means.

Claim 29 (Original): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising use permission information creation means for creating second use permission information that permits the use of said merge user information providing means.

Claim 30 (Original): The managing apparatus of the claim 29, wherein said use permission information creation means creates said second use permission information including said first use permission information by using said first use permission information.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 25, further comprising means for setting up said ~~subordinate~~ user information items providing means according to a request.

Claims 32-43 (Canceled).

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring [[said]] different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means; and

merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user.

Claim 45 (Canceled).

Claim 46 (Currently Amended): An information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for providing user information items regarding a user, said method comprising:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus including said user information items providing means and other user information items

providing means, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 47 (Canceled).

Claim 48 (Currently Amended): A managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information apparatus including a plurality of means for providing information items regarding a user, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring [[said]] different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means;

merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user; and
transmitting a set up request of said user information items providing means.

Claim 49 (Canceled).

Claim 50 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method for providing merge information in a merge user information providing ~~apparatus~~ apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing information items regarding a user, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring [[said]] different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means; and

merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user.

Claim 51 (Canceled).

Claim 52 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method of providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including a means for providing information items regarding a user, said method comprising:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus including said user information items providing means and other user information items providing means, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 53 (Canceled).

Claim 54 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented method of managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring [[said]] different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means;

merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user; and

transmitting a set up request for a set up of said user information items providing means.

Claim 55 (Canceled).

Claim 56 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium storing program code for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge

user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring [[said]] different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means; and
merging said different acquired user information items regarding said user.

Claim 57 (Canceled).

Claim 58 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium storing program code for providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for providing user information items regarding a user, said method comprising:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus including said user information items providing means and other user information items providing means, a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user to said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 59 (Canceled).

Claim 60 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium storing program code for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, said method comprising the steps of:

acquiring [[said]] different user information items regarding said user from each of said plurality of user information items providing means;

merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user; and
transmitting a set up request for a set up of each of said plurality of user information
items providing means.

Claim 61 (Canceled).

Claim 62 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing apparatus
comprising:

a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user;
means for acquiring [[said]] a first user information item regarding a user registered to
one of said user information providing means of which use is permitted; and
means for acquiring [[said]] a second user information item regarding the same user
registered to other user information item providing means, without distinguishing the user as
to whether or not the use of said user information item providing means is permitted, said
merge information providing apparatus merging said acquired first and second user
information items regarding said user.

Claim 63 (Currently Amended): The merge information providing apparatus as
claimed in claim 62, further comprising:

means for managing distinction information that distinguishes said user registered to
said user information providing means;

means for acquiring said first and second user information items regarding said user
from said user information items providing means; and

means for merging said first and second user information items regarding said user
acquired in said user information acquisition means.

Claim 64 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 63, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said same user to said user information acquisition means in response to a request from said user information acquisition means.

Claim 65 (Currently Amended): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said first and second user information items regarding said user from said user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said user information providing means.

Claim 66 (Previously Presented): The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, further comprising means for setting up said subordinate user information providing means according to a request.

Claims 67-76 (Canceled).

Claim 77 (Currently Amended): An information providing apparatus comprising:
means for providing user information items regarding a user, said user information providing means corresponding to a distinction information that distinguishes said user registered to said user information providing means and/or other user information providing means to a merge user information providing apparatus in response to a request from said merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said user information items providing means and other user information items

providing means, said user information providing means and other user information providing means including different information items regarding a user.

Claim 78 (Currently Amended): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, further comprising means for saving said different information items regarding the user.

Claim 79 (Currently Amended): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein said information items regarding said user [[is]] includes user information and/or group information of a group to which said user belongs, said group information including user information and/or group information of other user information providing means.

Claim 80 (Canceled).

Claim 81 (Currently Amended): The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 78, wherein said user information items providing means further comprises means for saving said user information regarding to said user.

Claim 82 (Canceled).

Claim 83 (Currently Amended): A managing apparatus, comprising:
a merge information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, each of the plurality of means for providing user information items including different user information items regarding said user; and

means for transmitting information regarding set up of said user information items providing means,

means for acquiring said different user information items regarding a user registered to the user information items providing means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information providing means, without distinguishing the user by the user information providing means of which use is permitted, said merge information providing apparatus merging said acquired different user information items regarding said user.

Claim 84 (Currently Amended): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, comprising:

means for managing distinction information that distinguishes whether said user is registered to said user information providing means;

means for acquiring [[said]] a plurality of different user information items regarding said user from said user information providing means; and

means for merging said plurality of different user information items regarding said user acquired in said user information acquisition means.

Claim 85 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said same user to said user information acquisition means in response to a request from said user information acquisition means.

Claim 86 (Currently Amended): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said plurality of different user

information items regarding said user from said user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said user information providing means.

Claim 87 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, further comprising means for setting up said user information providing means according to a request.

Claim 88 (Previously Presented): The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, further comprising means for displaying a screen for setting up said merge user information providing means and said user information providing means.

Claims 89-99 (Canceled).

Claim 100 (Currently Amended): A merge user information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a plurality of different information items regarding a user registered to said user information item providing means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information items providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted; and

merging said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said user.

Claims 101-102 (Canceled).

Claim 103 (Currently Amended): An information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for providing information items regarding a user, comprising the step of:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said user information items providing means and other user information items providing means, a plurality of different information items regarding a user corresponding to distinction information registered to said user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 104 (Canceled).

Claim 105 (Currently Amended): A managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a plurality of different information items regarding a user registered to said user information providing items means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information items providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted;

merging said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said user; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said user information items providing means.

Claims 106-110 (Canceled).

Claim 111 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the step of:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said user information items providing means and other user information items providing means, a plurality of different information items regarding a user corresponding to distinction information registered to said user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 112 (Canceled).

Claim 113 (Currently Amended): A computer-implemented managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a plurality of different information items regarding a user registered to said user information items providing means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information items providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted;

merging said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said user; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said information items providing means.

Claims 114-115 (Canceled).

Claim 116 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium storing a program code for providing merge user information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a plurality of different information items regarding a user registered to said user information items providing means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information items providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted; and

merging said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said user.

Claims 117-118 (Canceled).

Claim 119 (Previously Presented): A processor-readable medium for providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the step of:

providing, in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including said user information

items providing means and other user information items providing means, a plurality of different information items regarding a user corresponding to distinction information registered to said user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus.

Claim 120 (Canceled).

Claim 121 (Currently Amended): A processor-readable medium for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing user information items regarding a user, comprising the steps of:

acquiring a plurality of different information items regarding a user registered to said user information item providing means of which use is permitted and the same user registered to other user information items providing means, without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted; and

merging said acquired plurality of different user information items regarding said user; and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said information items providing means.

Claim 122-123 (Canceled).

Claim 124 (Currently Amended): A merge information providing apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving an acquisition request for access for a user to an information provider of a plurality of information providers;

means for acquiring a plurality of different user information items regarding the user from the plurality of information providers based on the acquisition request; and

means for merging the acquired plurality of different user information items into merged user information.